

The Talking Stick

The talking stick was originally used by Native American tribes as a reminder to use words to make important decisions or solve problems, instead of using weapons or force. It is a tradition that has been passed down through generations because it sets a respectful and caring tone to the community.

The talking stick teaches children that they can make decisions without aggressive words or actions. It is useful to help children begin to trust that they do not need to compete for time and attention to be heard. All people have equal opportunity to hold the stick and speak. It becomes a symbol of respectful communication.

"When we come together to solve a problem, we will use a talking stick to remind us of whose turn it is to talk. The person holding the talking stick can speak and everyone else must listen. When the talking stick comes to you, take a few deep breaths and think about what you are going to say. When you are finished talking, hold the stick to make sure there's nothing else you want to say. Then pass the stick to the other person. If you do not want to say anything, say PASS. You can have another turn to speak when you pass."

The talking stick does not have to be a stick at all. Experiment with different objects or artifacts. Use the talking stick to resolve problem *you* have with the group.